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The Afghan Regime: Prospects for Political Consolidation [redacted] 25X1

An Intelligence Assessment

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NESA 86-10046
December 1986
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Erratum

Notice to recipients of DI Intelligence Assessment NESA 86-10046, [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] December 1986, *The Afghan Regime: Prospects for Political Consideration.* [redacted] 25X1 25X1

In the box on page 2, the second bullet in the second column should read:

- *The government promises to maintain and promote the development of national minorities and border tribes and to provide just representation for all tribes and clans in the state, social, central, and local authorities and in the National Fatherland Front. Authorities will respect the traditional customs of assembly and aid the Pashtun and Baluch tribes along the border.*

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The Afghan Regime: Prospects for Political Consolidation

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian
Analysis, with contributions from
Office of Leadership Analysis, and
NESA.

Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESA

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The Afghan Regime: Prospects for Political Consolidation

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Key Judgments

Information available as of 25 November 1986 was used in this report.

The failure of the Soviet and Afghan regimes to build durable political and military institutions in Afghanistan makes it highly unlikely that the USSR will be able to reduce its troop strength significantly any time soon, barring a political decision by Moscow to abandon the Kabul regime. For nearly seven years, Moscow has tried unsuccessfully to overcome the problems that have plagued the Afghan regime: a seriously divided ruling party, a weak and unreliable military, lack of control over much of the countryside, and the unpopularity both of Marxism in a staunchly Islamic country and of any leader so dependent on foreign backing.

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Since late 1985, the Afghan regime has redoubled its efforts to develop its institutions. This intensified Afghan strategy—which the Soviets designed—has several major elements:

- A campaign to enhance Kabul's legitimacy and increase its popularity. This focuses on making the government more representative of Afghan society by appointing nonparty members to government posts; minimizing the role of Marxist ideology; writing a new constitution that promises to increase the power of non-Marxist organizations; and intensifying the courtship of traditional religious and tribal elites.

- A campaign to strengthen the party and the armed forces, including a Gorbachev-style anticorruption drive in the party and another major conscription campaign to increase the size of the armed forces.

- A campaign to diversify responsibility for security by developing military and paramilitary groups. This campaign focuses on forming tribal militias and securing their loyalty.

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At the same time, the regime is expanding its use of subversive techniques against its enemies in Pakistan and inside Afghanistan. In Pakistan, the Afghan regime has launched a destabilization program aimed at dividing the Afghan resistance from its most important external supporters. In Afghanistan, the regime's intelligence services are improving their ability to penetrate insurgent groups, gain intelligence on insurgent plans, and counteract insurgent intelligence networks in the government. To the extent that effective military targeting of insurgent convoys is a result of better intelligence collection, these successes are feeding insurgent concerns and making it more difficult for the insurgents to resupply their fighters and civilian supporters.

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These programs have made little headway. Party factionalism increased dramatically after Najib replaced Babrak Karmal as party secretary general in May. The regime's effort to broaden its support is widely regarded by Afghans with suspicion, and the stepped-up conscription for the armed forces is meeting opposition and is unlikely to improve the caliber or numbers of reliable troops. Longstanding and bitter rivalries within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and differences between Kabul and Moscow over how far "national reconciliation" should go will prevent the creation of an effective party apparatus at the local level for many years to come.

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Moscow and Kabul's respective agendas will probably increasingly diverge as the Soviets readjust their counterinsurgency strategy, a process that has already begun. In seeking at least a token broadening of the regime and replacing Babrak, the Soviets are contributing to palpable uneasiness in Kabul over Moscow's reliability as an ally. One antiregime party has already been created from disgruntled Babrak supporters calling for the ouster of the Soviets

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As demonstrated by long-term education programs that send Afghan elementary students for a decade of instruction in the USSR, Moscow probably believes it can outlast its opponents. It intends, along with Kabul, to press those measures that hold the most promise of breaking the resistance's or Pakistan's will in the near-to-middle term. These will include programs aimed at dividing the insurgents from their civilian support network, increasing pressure on resistance supply routes, implementing diplomatic measures to improve the legitimacy of the Afghan regime at the expense of the resistance alliance, and increasing sabotage within Pakistan. Countering this strategy will require sustained, substantial external support for the insurgents—including sanctuaries; arms, food, and other logistic support; and more aggressive public diplomacy on their behalf.

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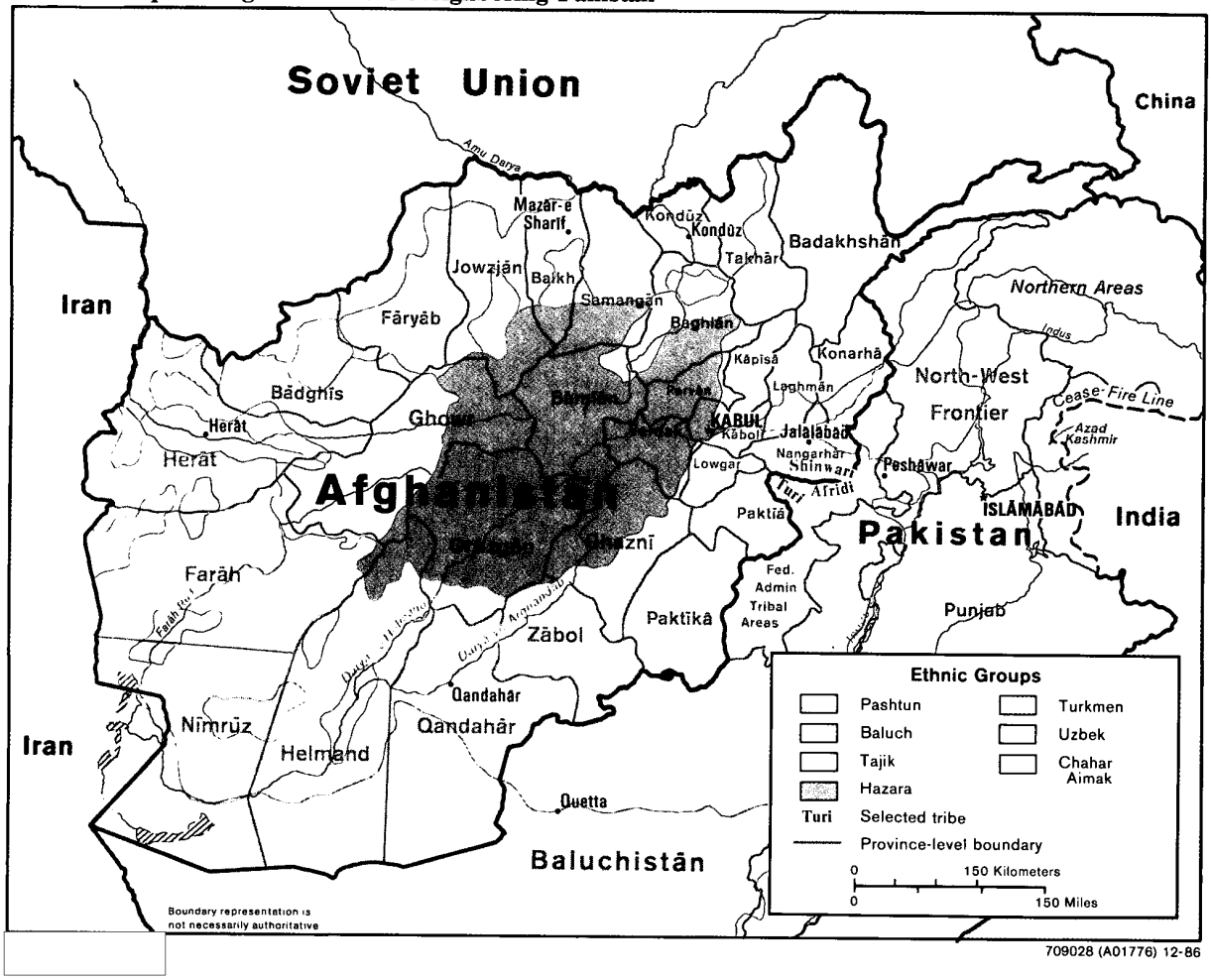
Figure 1
Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan and Neighboring Pakistan



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The Afghan Regime: Prospects for Political Consolidation

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An Evolving Strategy for Political Consolidation

Since 1985 the Afghan regime has redoubled its efforts to enhance its political legitimacy and increase its popularity. The Soviets have played a key role in designing and pushing this policy.

In addition to focusing on institution building in the party and government, the regime's approach aims at neutralizing support for the insurgents and exploiting their weaknesses using a variety of political and military techniques. The Afghan Ministry of State Security, better known as KHAD, has been at the forefront of this effort.[2] Najib was head of KHAD before assuming his current post as general secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

Babrak's Efforts To Consolidate Political Control

The image-building campaign began in earnest last November, when then party head Babrak Karmal sought to reinvigorate efforts to improve the regime's international standing and legitimacy. The government publicly minimized its Marxist-Leninist ambitions and stressed its commitment to traditional Afghan politics and values. Speeches by Babrak and other key Afghan officials portrayed the government as pluralistic and the party as only one of a number of organizations governing Afghanistan.

In November 1985, Kabul provided the theoretical basis for the shift in emphasis, one that almost certainly was prompted by Moscow's loss of patience with the regime's problems. In a major speech outlining the regime's much touted campaign to broaden its support, Babrak underlined Kabul's willingness to expand talks, contacts, and understanding with those elements "unconsciously taking a hostile position against the revolution or those repenting their counterrevolutionary deeds." The speech also revealed the broad outlines of a policy—referred to as the 10 theses—aimed at improving the regime's popularity and neutralizing support for the resistance.

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We believe the 10 theses speech was an admission—by Kabul and Moscow—that the Communist regime lacked popular appeal. The speech promised that all social groups—tribes, ethnic groups, religious groups, capitalists, entrepreneurs, and peasants and middle landowners—would be represented in the government. The new approach emphasized respect for Islam, relying on traditional tribal councils to neutralize support for the resistance in the strategic eastern provinces and on economic incentives—land reform, rural economic aid, and the encouragement of private investment—to build popular support. Nonparty organizations such as the National Fatherland Front, the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan, and the national women's organization were to play a greater role in government.

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In subsequent months, Kabul announced other measures to broaden support for the government:

- Fourteen nonparty members were appointed to Cabinet and sub-Cabinet posts.
- Three nonparty members were made provincial governors.
- Seventy-nine additions were made to the government's Revolutionary Council—the rubberstamp legislature. Most were not members of the party.
- A new constitution, now in draft form, was being written to put the regime on a sounder legal footing.
- Local elections, which began in August 1985, were scheduled for all provinces of Afghanistan.

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[2] The Afghan intelligence service (KHAD) was renamed the Ministry of State Security in January. In this assessment, KHAD will be used to refer to the Ministry.

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Babrak Karmal's 10 Theses

On 9 November 1985, Babrak made a major policy address before the Revolutionary Council that provided the theoretical basis of Kabul's widely publicized "broadening campaign." The objectives of the Afghan revolution were specified in the form of 10 theses, paraphased below:

- *The revolutionary process is a long and difficult one.*
- *The essence of state rule stems from the national and democratic character of the revolution. This rule considers the right of broad participation of all true patriots. These include representatives of all social strata and groups of the country—workers, peasants, and middle landowners; artisans and intellectuals; armed forces staff; private investors; capitalists; spiritual leaders; and "credible social personalities" from all nationalities, tribes, and clans. The new approach regarding the expansion of the social pillars of the revolution includes broadening of leading state bodies—including the Revolutionary Council and the Council of Ministers—with credible representatives of the people. Power will not be monopolized by the party.*
- *Greater attention is to be paid to providing economic support for and improving production in agriculture. Just solutions of land and water questions are promised.*
- *The interests of the private sector in transport industries, services, and trade are to be taken into consideration in the financial, taxation, loan, customs, and pricing policies of the state.*
- *The interests of intellectuals and skilled workers are to be protected by promoting education and the sciences.*
- *The government promises to maintain and promote the development of national minorities and border tribes and to provide just representation for all tribes and clans in the state, social, central, and local authorities and in National Fatherland Front. Authorities will respect the traditional customs of assembly and aid the Pashtun and Baluch tribes along the border.*
- *The government will strive to consolidate the National Fatherland Front and other social and mass organizations, such as trade unions and the "democratic" organizations of youth and women. Other such groups will be allowed as long as they agree to work with the regime.*
- *Religious leaders and respect for Islam will be valued by the state. No one will be allowed to mistreat Islam.*
- *The Soviets will depart Afghanistan as soon as foreign armed interference ceases and its nonrecurrence is guaranteed. The armed forces, including the police forces, KHAD, the militia, tribal groups, and revolutionary self-defense groups, will be strengthened.*
- *The aim of the government's foreign policy is to consolidate peace for all.*

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Babrak put particular emphasis on winning support from Pashtun tribes astride the most important insurgent supply routes on both sides of the border with Pakistan. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, in 1985 the regime convened two councils or *jirgas* to demonstrate support for the regime. The *Loya Jirga*—a national council that traditionally had the role of acknowledging or rejecting any new government in Kabul—was held with much fanfare in April to give the government a stronger legal basis. The tribal *jirga,* held in September, attracted many delegates from the Pakistani side of the border.

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We do not believe these measures garnered the regime much new popular support. Most of the nonparty appointees had been affiliated with the regime for years, and the *jirga* delegates were well paid for their attendance. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, most Kabulis regarded the local elections as a sham.

Najib's Emerging Agenda

The resignation of Babrak Karmal as party chief and his replacement by state security chief Najib in May 1986 came after numerous indications in the Soviet media that Moscow had grown dissatisfied with Babrak's leadership. At the 19th plenum of the PDPA Central Committee in July, Najib announced an ambitious—and, in our view, unrealistic—agenda. The agenda aimed, according to regime media accounts, at ending the insurgency by the 10th anniversary of the Communist takeover, that is by April 1988. Like Babrak's efforts, Najib's program relies heavily on creating the appearance of reconciliation with some of the regime's opponents, while using a mixture of military pressure, tribal policy, and subversion to crack down on insurgent infiltration and erode Pakistani support.

Najib's ascension, in our view, was a reward for his success as intelligence chief in orchestrating the regime's tribal policy and developing KHAD into what we believe is the regime's only effective political institution. We believe Moscow also hoped that Najib's Pashtun heritage would better suit him for pacifying the predominantly Pashtun tribal areas in the east than Babrak, who is a Tajik.

Tribal Policy. Najib's tribal policy—like Babrak's—is designed to increase support for the regime and hinder resistance movement through tribal areas. It also aims at raising Islamabad's fears about Kabul's ability to foment unrest among the restive border tribes by encouraging the establishment of an independent Pashtunistan. We believe Kabul's tribal policy is, in part, an implicit indictment of the Afghan armed forces. To a large extent, the regime is counting on the policy to make up for the failure of the armed forces to provide for local security. Broadly defined, the policy consists of:

- Bribing local tribal leaders with arms, money, and positions in order to convince them to deny the resistance transit through selected border regions and to increase the number of tribal militias armed by and loyal to Kabul.

- A destabilization campaign—including bombings, sabotage, and cross-border air raids—in Pakistan's tribal border region aimed at unsettling the Pakistani Government and creating tension between local Pakistanis and the roughly 3 million Afghan refugees located there.

- Exploiting discontent in Pakistan with Islamabad's interference in the Pashtun and Baluch tribal areas over such issues as narcotics control.

Najib's rise to head of the party signaled a more aggressive tribal policy.

According to the US Embassy in Islamabad, Kabul Radio also began a propaganda blitz into Pakistan obviously aimed at sparking violence between Pakistani Government and tribal authorities, reducing tribal support for the insurgents, and turning Pakistanis against the Afghan refugees.

Although the regime vigorously denies any destabilization activity inside Pakistan, in late August Najib reiterated the regime's longstanding and traditional friendship with the Pashtun and Baluch tribes, and Kabul celebrated "Pashtunistan Day" on 31 August—an obvious bid to encourage separatist sentiment in the region. Resistance leaders have also complained to US officials about Kabul's efforts to manipulate "leftist" Baluch tribes in Pakistan.

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Najib: Old Wine in a New Bottle?

Najib has much to offer Moscow as general secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Staunchly pro-Soviet, he has demonstrated vigor, determination, and unquestioned loyalty to the Soviet cause. We believe his tenure as head of KHAD proved his mettle and drew him closer to the KGB.

Although Najib spent nearly 11 years in medical school, his main interest has always been politics. He became involved in a Communist youth group during high school and joined the PDPA soon after its establishment in 1965. When the party split in 1967, he joined Babrak's Parchami faction and spent his latter years in medical school as a student organizer. Najib eventually became president of a Parchami student group and a member of its central committee.

Upon his graduation in 1975, Najib served briefly in the military before becoming a full-time politician. In 1977 he was appointed to Parcham's liaison committee with the USSR, where he developed close ties to the KGB. After the Communist coup that brought a reunited PDPA to power in 1978, Najib became a member of the Revolutionary Council and served briefly as Deputy Minister of Interior. As party unity cracked and the Khalqis consolidated their power, Najib was exiled as Ambassador to Iran. He fled to Prague later that year with the Embassy's funds when the Khalqi leadership dismissed and exiled leading Parchamis.

Najib's spectacular rise to power began after the Soviet invasion in 1979. He immediately returned to Kabul and became a full member of the Central Committee. Two months later, he became head of KHAD, with the military rank of lieutenant general, and was reappointed to the Revolutionary Council. In 1981 he was appointed a full member of the Politburo and became a secretary in the Central Committee. By November 1985, with his appointment to the Central Committee Secretariat where he was responsible for all of the regime's security services, he became a serious candidate to succeed Babrak Karmal as party general secretary and did so in May 1986. 25X1

We believe that Najib has been aided in his ascent to power by his ties to party leaders, Soviet confidence in his ability, and ruthlessness. His links to leading Parchamis stem from his diplomatic exile in 1978, where he became close to fellow exiles Nur Ahmad Nur, Anahita Ratebzad, Mahmud Baryalai, and Babrak Karmal. After fleeing Tehran, Najib joined Nur and Baryalai in Eastern Europe to recruit supporters and plot the overthrow of the Khalqis. 25X1

Najib is thoroughly devoted to the Kremlin and Soviet ideology and looks to Stalin as a role model. 25X1

In addition to eliminating Babrak's support in the party, Najib must also overcome his violently anti-Khalqi reputation to consolidate his power. 25X1 25X1

Najib, 40, claims to speak Dari, Russian, German, French, English, and Urdu, in addition to his native Pashtu. His father was a political agitator in Pakistan during the Daud government's efforts to create the ethnic state of Pashtunistan in the mid-1970s. Married, he has three daughters. 25X1 25X1

Perhaps the most significant success for the regime's tribal policy is occurring in the Qandahar area, where insurgents say tribal militias are the mainstay of the regime. The militias serve under the direction of former insurgent leader Ismatullah Achakzai, who defected to the regime in mid-1985.

insurgent resupply in the Qandahar area has been made much more difficult since Ismatullah established security posts along a major insurgent supply route outside the city.

As in the past, however, the Pashtun tribal leaders are keeping their options open and selling their services to the highest bidder. Even Ismatullah occasionally cooperates with the resistance if the price is right or a personal or tribal relationship exists.

The tribes elsewhere have proved unable or unwilling to impede resistance transit. Former Afghan army officer Sarwar Nuristani's efforts to block the strategic insurgent supply route through Nuristan have not been successful. Early this year,

Nuristani's efforts to raise a proregime tribal militia were being resisted by local mullahs who publicly condemned his activities.

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Although it is unlikely to alter Islamabad's Afghanistan policy any time soon, the subversive aspect of Kabul's tribal policy is making it costlier for Pakistan to support the insurgents. According to the US Embassy in Islamabad, civilian support for Pakistan's Afghan policy—especially in the North-West Frontier Province—is eroding, and the political left has been handed a new issue. Sabotage is frequently conducted by KGB-trained Afghan intelligence operatives sent into Pakistan as refugees. We believe these agents not only create ill will against the refugee community—which is blamed for the violence—but also penetrate resistance groups to gather intelligence and foment divisions among their leaders.

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In Pakistan, regional experts disagree over how durable Kabul's efforts to buy tribal loyalty will prove to be. Tribal leaders are notorious for playing one side against another in their bid to preserve local autonomy. At the same time, the tribes—traditional fence-sitters—want to be on the winning side. If they perceive the resistance edge to be slipping, one Pakistani scholar argues, many groups—particularly the weaker clans—would do more for Kabul.

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[3] Islamabad sent 3,000 men from the Frontier Corps to subdue the Afridi and Shinwari tribes in the Khyber Agency last December. The dissident Wali Khan Kukikhel of the Afridi tribe, who has longstanding ties to Kabul, by March had made peace with Islamabad despite having received arms and money from Kabul for his cooperation.

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Depending on KHAD. As part of its tribal policy and destabilization campaign, the government is increasingly using its intelligence service, commonly known as KHAD, against the insurgents. KHAD is demonstrating increasing skill at penetrating resistance organizations, fueling factionalism and suspicions between various groups, and exploiting tribal divisions. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, KHAD is now a ubiquitous, powerful, disciplined, and feared organization that in many areas is more influential and useful to Moscow than the PDPA.

KHAD's collection efforts against resistance bands—most for years have paid almost no attention to the need for secrecy—have hurt the resistance's ability to evade ambushes and larger attacks.

We believe KHAD's successes, although insufficient to compensate for the armed forces' weaknesses, may be having an impact on resistance morale—at least indirectly. Although the situation has improved since then, earlier this summer resistance leaders complained about more effective interdiction of insurgent supply caravans. To the extent that effective military targeting of insurgent logistic convoys is a result of better intelligence, KHAD is feeding these concerns and making it more difficult for the insurgents to resupply their fighters and civilian supporters.

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Strengthening the Armed Forces. At best, the establishment of tribal militias and the more aggressive use of KHAD can be only stopgap measures, in our view, to buy the regime time to build military forces capable of ensuring the country's security. Najib has publicly admitted the serious deficiencies in the armed forces. Kabul is trying desperately—and with little success, in our view—to expand significantly the size of the army and limit desertions. Although the government last December ordered the size of the army increased from about 50,000 to 140,000, army strength had not even reached 60,000 by March,

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The government continues to try to increase the army's size. In mid-June the regime began a stepped-up conscription drive that eliminated student draft deferments, offered "amnesty" to returning deserters,

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As part of an apparent effort to allow the Afghan army to assume more of the burden of fighting the war, Kabul late last year began giving more static security reponsibilities to civilian paramilitary groups, military units of KHAD, and the police:

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[redacted]

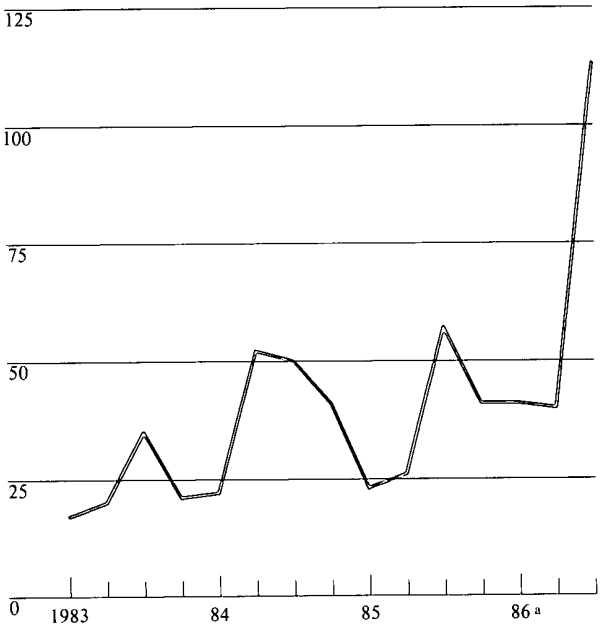
In an apparent effort to improve the reliability of local security forces, Najib announced in July that "defense councils" had been set up in the provinces. [redacted] the councils are composed of provincial party chiefs, provincial government leaders, and representatives from the militia. These councils will probably involve the party directly in supervising local security. [redacted]

Party oversight of the army is apparently also being stepped up. In late August, Najib assumed responsibility as commander in chief of the armed forces. Previously, Babrak Karmal as president of the Revolutionary Council had this role. According to Najib, 80 percent of the officer corps are either party members or members of the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan, a regime-sponsored youth group that serves as a party recruitment mechanism. [redacted]

We believe efforts to improve the performance of the armed forces will have only marginal impact. Previous attempts to upgrade performance via conscription failed because the recruits generally are ill trained, have poor morale, and defect at the first opportunity.

[redacted]

Figure 2
Afghanistan: Rocket Attacks in Kabul, 1983-86



a 1986 data available through September.

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[redacted]

Soviet efforts to have the Afghan armed forces take the lead in combat have had little impact. The Afghan army scored a major success in capturing a large insurgent base camp in April, but during the summer the insurgents held the initiative. Afghan troops have played a secondary role in major military campaigns since April and have been hard pressed to deal with insurgent attacks. The insurgents destroyed two major ammunition dumps in the Kabul area, [redacted] and demonstrated a capability to infiltrate Herat and Qandahar despite the regime's tougher perimeter security measures. [redacted]

Seeking Government Credibility. Najib—more forcefully than Babrak—has emphasized the need to seek popular support for the government. At the 19th Central Committee plenum in July he claimed that elections at the local level had been held "in most provinces." In a subsequent press conference he admitted that elections in 10 of the country's 29 provinces were still in the preparatory stages, although the regime claims they have since been completed. Selection of a State Council—a bicameral legislature consisting of an appointed council of nationalities and an elected council of representatives—scheduled to take place by the end of October, has not yet occurred, an apparent victim of party feuding over how to choose candidates, according to the US Embassy in Kabul.

Blaming the party for popular dissatisfaction with the regime, Najib excoriated the PDPA cadre for inept performance, factionalism, slackness, lack of principle, and malfeasance during the July plenum. He hinted broadly at demotions, sacking, and punishment of incompetent or corrupt officials, including members of the Cabinet and Politburo. The election of new members to the Central Inspection Commission of the Central Committee—responsible for, among other things, investigating complaints to the party—suggests that an anticorruption drive will be given teeth. Although the anticorruption drive may simply provide an excuse for eliminating Najib's enemies several provincial party leaders have already been removed.

Najib has reiterated the regime's intention to use economic incentives to achieve its ends. At a Politburo meeting in July, he warned that Cabinet members unable to meet economic targets would be dismissed. He said the state's first five-year plan envisaged preferential treatment to tribes and nationalities who are in a "more difficult situation"—presumably under greater insurgent pressure. He also instructed party members to take more interest in economic development issues and to encourage private investment.

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we believe the regime is not making headway at winning popular support. The so-called local elections—held mostly in provincial capitals under the watchful eye of security forces—often required regime officials to draft candidates who were then elected by a show of hands. In November, Najib admitted that even in Kabol Province elections were conducted in fewer than one-third of the villages. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, most politically aware Afghans view Kabul's efforts toward more representative government as a charade.

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We believe the regime's reliance on coercion almost certainly works against its political gestures toward Afghans siding with the resistance. Analysis of other insurgencies shows that counterinsurgency programs with a harsh, imprecise coercive component almost never work, even when accompanied by sound civic action programs. In Afghanistan, where revenge is a strongly held cultural value, attacks against home and family are doubly felt. Consequently, we doubt that Kabul will get much beyond gaining the acquiescence of those Afghans driven by fighting to move to the few urban enclaves where regime control is relatively good, such as Kabul, Jalalabad, and Mazar-e Sharif.

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Aiming Abroad. We believe the regime's so-called broadening program is aimed almost exclusively at a foreign audience. Kabul may be calculating that efforts to broaden the base of the regime, while unconvincing inside Afghanistan, will be well received in Pakistan among opposition groups who criticize Islamabad for not trying hard enough to reach a

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People "elect" representatives to local government in Kabol Province.

Afghanistan Today ©

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political solution to the war. Similarly, minimizing the Marxist character of the regime appears aimed at bolstering Afghanistan's so-called nonaligned credentials.

Najib's July address to the Central Committee warned of a heightened campaign of public diplomacy timed to coincide with the UN General Assembly session and the summit meeting of the Nonaligned Movement. Najib urged that "propaganda and counterpropaganda" be stepped up, particularly during the period before the Nonaligned summit in Zimbabwe in September and the General Assembly session shortly thereafter. Kabul has aggressively sought to establish diplomatic relations with various Third World countries. It has obtained agreement in principle from Zimbabwe—current chairman of the Nonaligned Movement—to do so, although Harare has since indicated it will not establish relations until a political solution to the Afghan conflict is reached. Kabul also tried to gain the Asian Group's endorsement for its candidacy for one of the UN General Assembly vice presidencies.

As part of this offensive, the regime is trying to woo credible exiles in the refugee community and some resistance leaders.

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Despite these efforts, Kabul's inability to negotiate successfully—after repeated efforts—with many of the most effective insurgent commanders and political leaders makes it difficult to form the type of coalition government that might gain it genuine popular support.

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In press interviews, Najib admitted that the regime is

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Party General Secretary Najib (left) meets with religious leaders in Kabul. Proving its Islamic credentials is very important to the regime.

Der Spiegel ©

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"decisively determined to eliminate the (resistance) leaders . . . who sold out." Abandoning its unsuccessful efforts to establish truces with the more dedicated resistance commanders, the regime conducted a series of trials in July that condemned to death in absentia a half-dozen major insurgent leaders, including Masood and Herat's Ismail Khan.

Party Problems

In our view, intensified factionalism within the PDPA since Babrak's removal in May will hamper the regime's efforts to build even a facade of public support and force Najib to spend much of his time over the next year seeking to consolidate his position. Najib's reputation for ruthlessness and his record of anti-Khalqi behavior made his ascendance controversial and convinced many of Babrak Karmal's supporters that their days were numbered.

Immediately after Babrak's ouster, infighting intensified between the rival Khalqi and Parchami factions, and within the Parchami faction among supporters of Babrak, Najib, and Prime Minister Keshtmand. Public protests, hundreds of resignations from the party, anti-Soviet outbursts, and work slowdowns in government ministries occurred and delayed for several weeks the 19th Central Committee plenum.

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The leadership change further eroded the military's effectiveness and reliability, in our view. armed clashes occurred between Babrak and Najib supporters in Afghan army units, arrests of pro-Babrak officers in the army and in the intelligence services had begun, and the expectation of further purges in the armed forces was causing considerable unease.

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Najib's history of anti-Khalqi behavior and hints of further purges will sustain party unrest, in our view. Of the seven ministers Najib criticized by name in August for failing to meet first-quarter economic targets, three were Khalqis. According to the US Embassy, these warnings and the dismissal of other

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Underlying Weaknesses in the Party

The split in the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan dates back almost to the party's founding in 1965, and by 1967 Khalq and Parcham became separate factions. Each took its name from its party newspaper. Differences over political tactics were an important factor in the original Parcham-Khalq schism, according to Western political observers, with the early Khalqis favoring revolutionary extremism and the Parchamis favoring more moderate tactics. We believe that the differences also have social and ethnic roots. Parchamis tend to come from urban and middle- or upper-class backgrounds and Khalqis from the rural lower class. Nearly all Khalqis are Pashtun, while nearly all Parchamis are from some other ethnic group. (Najibullah, a Pashtun Parchami, is an exception.) Subfactions based on personal following, family ties, tribalism, or ethnicity also exist.

In 1977 the two factions united under Soviet pressure but only papered over their differences. These differences reappeared in mid-1978, soon after the party came to power. In the next few months the Khalqis exiled or jailed most important Parchamis and dominated the Communist movement. Since December 1979, when Soviet troops overthrew the Khalqis and installed a government in which both factions were represented, the Parchamis have gained slowly at Khalqi expense. Nevertheless, the preponderance of Khalqis in the Ministries of Defense and Interior means that they still wield considerable influence.

Moscow has been unable to heal the party's serious rifts despite repeated efforts to do so, and it will have to pay a price for choosing one faction over the other. Eliminating Khalqis, for example, would weaken considerably the effectiveness of the security forces, while abandoning the Parchamis would mean losing an educated class of administrators. 25X1

Despite repeated party recruitment drives, building party membership is a perennial problem. The party routinely inflates and readjusts its membership figures. It claimed 50,000 members in 1979, 120,000 in 1984, 134,000 in July 1985, and 150,000 in 1986. The party apparently recruits heavily from the national youth group, the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan. According to official statistics, half of the new party members in 1985 came from this group. Of the 120,000 members the party claimed in 1984, more than 70 percent were under 30, suggesting that the party may be having considerable difficulty recruiting older members. 25X1 25X1

We believe the latest data grossly exaggerate the size of the party. Most Western observers, for example, estimated party size in the early 1980s at less than half of what the regime claimed it to be. Moreover, many citizens, particularly in urban areas, undoubtedly have a party card because it is necessary to obtain jobs or government-supplied goods. Even if the party had grown at the pace suggested by official government figures, members would hardly have had time to be sufficiently indoctrinated in, much less committed to, Marxist theory. 25X1 25X1

officials are creating the impression that Najib's quest for power is leading him to strike out at all potential opponents.

Najib faces resistance to power sharing from party ideologues—a problem Babrak identified as early as November 1985—who probably also disagree with Moscow over how far the regime's so-called broadening and national reconciliation policies should go.[4] In departing comments to diplomats in Kabul, Soviet Ambassador Tabeyev complained of "extreme leftists" in the PDPA. Najib's warning to party cadre 25X1

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to party cadre to give "real power" to "mullahs, clergy, elders, and prestigious leaders of tribes and nationalities" who have been elected to local councils suggests that the party is plagued by a small, but worrisome, group of ideologues that is undermining regime programs.

Despite these problems, Najib has made progress in consolidating his control of the party:

- He removed Babrak from his remaining posts on the Politburo and as nominal head of state at the 20th Central Committee plenum in November, although Babrak remains in Kabul and his supporters have not been completely defeated.

- Soon after Najib's appointment, he obtained the backing of important Khalqi leaders such as Interior Minister Gulabzoi and Defense Minister Nazar Mohammad—support that we believe will help him cement his control over the military. The apparent co-optation of the Khalq, however, poses considerable risk for Najib should Khalqi acquiesence prove to be merely a tactic designed to exploit Parchami disarray and reestablish Khalqi control of the party.

- At the 19th and 20th Central Committee plenums, Najib appointed several of his supporters to the Politburo and roughly doubled the size of the Central Committee in a bid to staff it with people who would approve future leadership changes aimed at cementing his rule. The incorporation of two previously independent leftist labor unions into the party is also probably designed to dilute the influence of the pro-Babrak wing and swell the party's ranks with people beholden to Najib for their positions.

- In August, Anahita Ratebzad—a Politburo member and Babrak supporter who organized public protests against Najib—was relieved of her duties as head of the national women's organization.

- By September, the regime media were identifying Najib as commander in chief of the armed forces.

Najib must see his most important near-term goal as one of convincing Moscow that it did not make a mistake in selecting him to replace Babrak. We believe Moscow was surprised by the level of opposition in the party to Babrak's ouster. 25X1

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Moscow, in allowing Najib to remove Babrak from his remaining posts in the party and government last month, apparently decided to side with Najib in an effort to end Parchami feuding, which it believed was undercutting the regime's consolidation program. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, major government decisions, such as publishing the new constitution, selecting the bicameral legislature, and convening the National Fatherland Front congress, had been casualties of factional disputes over power sharing. Nevertheless, Babrak's supporters on the Politburo retain their posts—an apparent signal by Moscow that widespread purges would not be tolerated. As long as factional strife remains high, the Soviets will probably caution Najib to move slowly in removing Babrak's remaining supporters from positions of power in the party. 25X1

Outlook and Implications

We doubt that Najib or any other Communist leader will be able to build an effective party apparatus with nationwide influence and support for many years to come—at least not while broad international support for the resistance remains firm:

- Divisions within the PDPA may be deeper now than at any time since the Communist coup in 1978 and, given the deep historic, social, and ethnic roots of the party's factions, are likely to persist.

- Building a reliable political cadre at the local level—where regime officials make easy insurgent targets—will be virtually impossible without a much more pervasive and effective military presence in the countryside.

25X1

Politburo of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, as of November 1986

	Age	Faction	Date of Appointment	Comments
Full members				
Najib	40	Parcham	June 1981	Central Committee General Secretary.
Keshtmand, Soltan Ali	50	Parcham	December 1979	Prime Minister; probably sided with Najib against Babrak.
Laeq, Solayman	56	Parcham	July 1986	Appointed candidate member of Politburo, November 1985; close to Najib.
Nur, Nur Ahmad	49	Parcham	December 1979	Anti-Khalqi plotter 1978-79; may be jealous of Najib.
Rafi, Mohammad	42	Parcham	June 1981	
Ratebzad, Anahita	55	Parcham	December 1979	Strong Babrak supporter; rumored to be his mistress. She organized public protests against his removal and participated in work stoppages.
Watanjar, Mohammad Aslam	40	Khalq	June 1981	Enemy of Najib, but fellow Pashtun.
Ziray, Saleh Mohammad	50	Khalq	April 1978	
Yaqubi, Ghulam Faruq	42	Parcham	November 1986	Close friend and confidant of Najib; his deputy (1980-85) and successor as head of the intelligence service; appointed candidate member of Politburo, July 1986.
Candidate members				
Baryalai, Mahmud	42	Parcham	December 1979	Babrak's younger brother; anti-Khalqi coup plotter, 1978-79.
Karwal, Mir Sahib		Parcham	July 1986	Longtime party workhorse, ethnic Pashtun.
Mohammed, Nazar	58	Khalq	November 1985	Defense Minister.
Razmjo, Abdul Zohur	34	Parcham	December 1982	Longtime Babrak supporter; now in Najib camp.
Mazdak, Farid Ahmad	29	Parcham	November 1986	Secretary, Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan.
Gulabzoi, Sayed Mohammad	36	Khalq	November 1986	Leader of Khalq faction; Minister of Interior.

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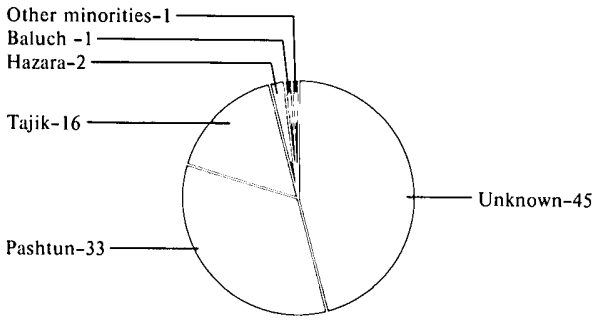
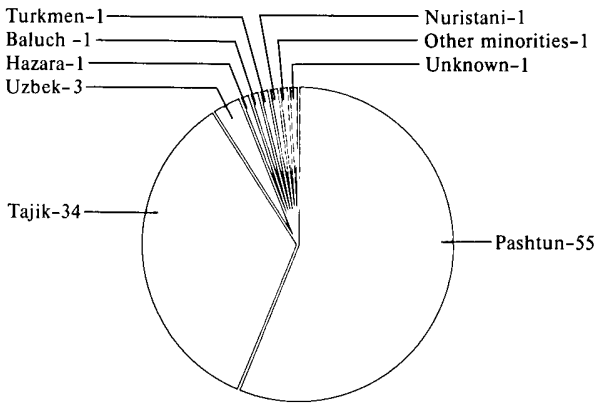
Figure 3
Afghanistan: Ethnic Composition of PDPA Central Committee[a]

Original Committee
(81 full and alternate members) *Percent*



New Committee(as of July 1986)
(146 full and alternate members) *Percent*



[a] Because of rounding components may not add to 100 percent.

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- The regime's "quick fix" approach to upgrading significantly the size and quality of the armed forces is unlikely to work, given the public opposition to the regime's conscription program and the conscripts' penchant to desert.

- We believe the unpopularity of Marxism—however thinly disguised—in the traditional Islamic culture of Afghanistan will continue to hinder the regime's efforts to attract either a loyal political cadre to administer government policies at the local level or a motivated military to protect the security of the state.

We believe Moscow's and Kabul's respective agendas will increasingly diverge as the Soviets readjust their counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan—a process that already has begun, in our view. In seeking at least a token broadening of the regime in Kabul and replacing Babrak Karmal, we believe the Soviets are contributing to a growing and palpable uneasiness in Kabul over Moscow's reliability as an ally. Soviet insistence that Kabul minimize the role of the party, seek participation of resistance figures, and assume more of the burden of fighting the war has not found broad acceptance among the PDPA leadership, in our view. The open warfare among the ruling elite—the regime's most dedicated supporters—over Soviet-mandated leadership changes strongly suggests that anti-Soviet sentiment is a problem even in the ruling party Moscow installed.

Because of these problems and the Soviet and Afghan regimes' failure to build durable political and military institutions in Afghanistan, the Soviets will not be able to reduce their military presence significantly without risking the collapse of the regime. Moscow still appears to believe it can outlast its opponents, but Najib's failure to produce progress might eventually force the Soviets to replace him.

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Looking to the Long Term: Educating the Next Generation [a]

The Soviets, who have proved unable to build a reliable political cadre in the major political institutions of the Afghan regime—KHAD, the armed forces, the party, and the National Fatherland Front—are now looking to the next generation of Afghans. They have recently begun to send 7- to 9-year-old Afghans for a decade of instruction in the USSR.

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Most of these students are children of party members or come from regime-controlled orphanages. Approximately two-thirds of those who left in late 1984 were from Kabol and Nangarhar Provinces. The regime, probably realizing the need for greater influence in the rural areas, approved a plan in early 1985 to send to the USSR some 600 youths from Afghan tribes near the Pakistani border and Shia minority groups from central Afghanistan,

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Training of postsecondary and technical students in the USSR has been going on since at least 1972, although their numbers increased dramatically after 1979 and steadily since then. These students go to the Soviet Union to escape military service, attend higher quality programs than those available at home, and enjoy a higher standard of living when they return. The regime has more than enough applicants for the approximately 3,000 scholarships available each year to study in the USSR.

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In the near term, Moscow is likely to continue to focus on the international arena, press the destabilization campaign in Pakistan, and push those military tactics that they hope will break the resistance's or its supporters' political will. These include wearing down the resistance's civilian support base, infiltrating resistance groups, and keeping steady pressure on logistic routes. 25X1

The insurgents, in our view, will require sustained, substantial external support—including weapons, communications, food and other supplies, and more aggressive diplomacy on their behalf—to counter this strategy. This summer's fighting shows that the insurgents can still retain the tactical initiative and cause the Soviet-Afghan side a good deal of pain. 25X1